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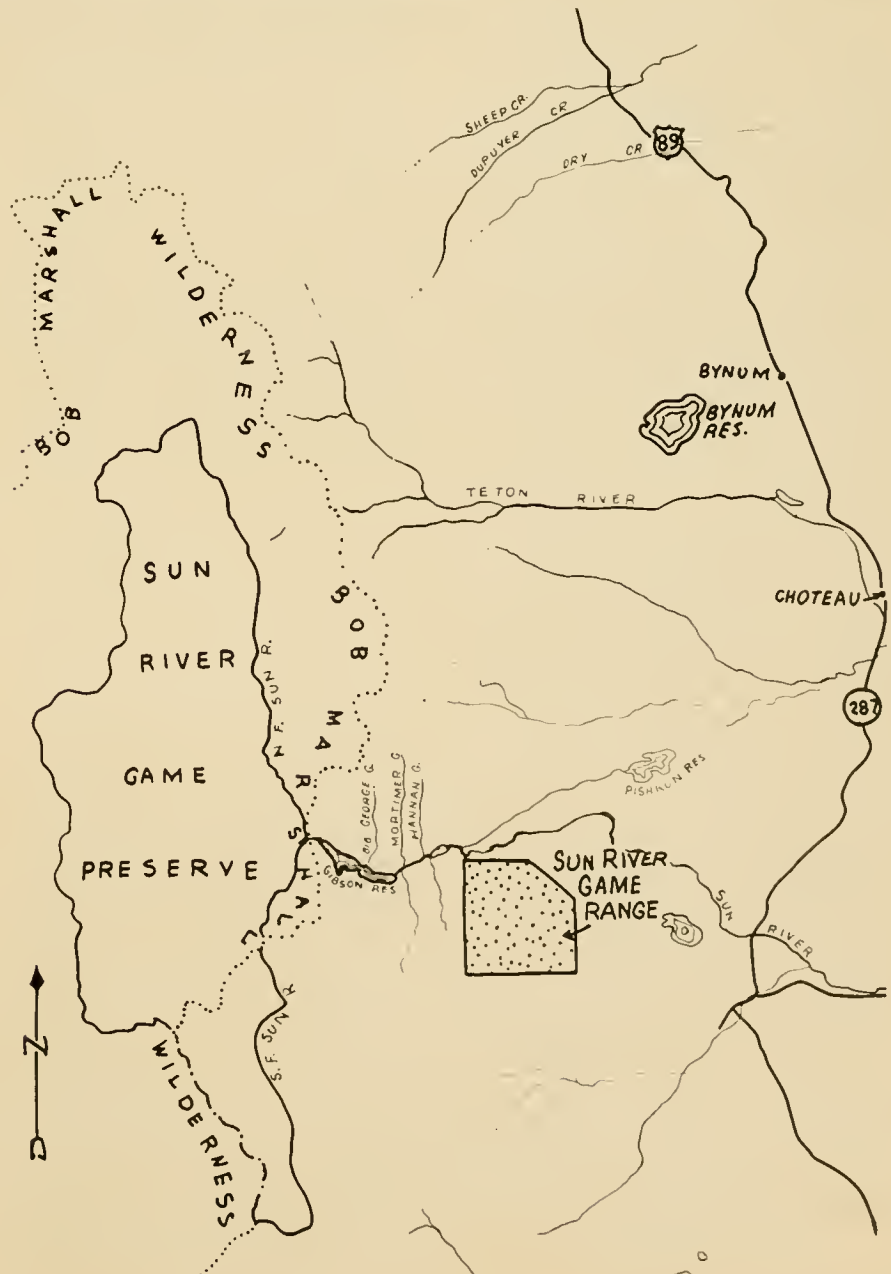
April, 1969

The Sun River Game Preserve

By Allen Schallenger

The Sun River Game Preserve, west of Augusta, was established by the Montana Legislature in 1913. The preserve comprises an area 42 miles long, generally six to 12 miles wide and totals almost 200,000 acres. It is bounded on the west by the Continental Divide and lies mostly within the Bob Marshall Wilderness. The south one-sixth of the preserve is outside the Bob Marshall Wilderness but within the boundaries of the proposed Lincoln-Scapegoat Wilderness which the Montana Fish and Game Commission has given support. The preserve is bounded on the east and north for 28 miles by the Bob Marshall Wilderness and is essentially a roadless, primitive region six to 12 miles wide. Early during fall hunting seasons five roads east of the preserve are normally open to travel but later only the Sun Canyon road is passable due to deep snow. Only the Benchmark road provides vehicle access to the preserve boundary; the others come no closer than six miles from the preserve.

The Sun River Game Preserve and the Sun River Game Range are two entirely different land areas. The game range, purchased



in 1948 by the Montana Fish and Game Commission, is located outside of the mountains in the foothills east of the Sun River Game Preserve. It is an essential winter range for the Sun River elk herd.

History shows the upper Sun River area is more of a wilderness today than it was in the late 1800's and early 1900's. Railroad tie cutters worked on the North Fork of the Sun River from 1886 to 1899. Homesteaders settled in Gates Park and along Cabin Creek in the early 1900's. Livestock grazing was practiced before 1910. However, reliable records of animal numbers are not available prior to that date.

When the preserve was established in 1913, 6,500 head of cattle and horses and 5,500 sheep were permitted to graze for six months on the national forest in the Sun River region. At present, approximately 1,100 cattle and horses are permitted to graze during summer on national forest lands east of the preserve with one exception. One commercial outfitter is allowed to graze 60 horses between the forks of the Sun River from early summer until the operation closes for the winter, usually in early December. No cattle grazing is allowed in the Bob Marshall Wilderness or in the preserve. Elk counts showed 965 head in the Sun River area when the preserve was established.

Sun River Game Preserve and Fires

While reduction of livestock grazing was beneficial to both wildlife range and animal numbers, fires which swept the Sun River drainage and 35 percent of the Bob Marshall Wilderness in the late 1800's, 1910 and 1919 contributed substantially to wildlife

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The vigor and good health of an elk herd is reflected in a high rate of reproduction.

habitat. Because of the increasingly effective forest fire detection and suppression methods, many burned areas have reforested to a dense cover of lodgepole pine, Douglas fir and Engelmann spruce providing less suitable elk range. While most of the Sun River Game Preserve is presently thickly forested, open parks occur along the West Fork of the Sun River and some drainage heads near the Continental Divide. Comparison of old and recent photographs shows the reforestation of burns and the natural encroachment of timber into some areas which were open, grassy parks at the time the preserve was established. Most of the North Fork of the Sun River was open grasslands in the late 1800's.

History shows the elk population responded to the improved living conditions and increased rapidly even with either sex hunting seasons. In 1917, 1,708 were counted. By 1922, symptoms of malnutrition were apparent in the elk herd. A study of the elk ranges in 1924-25 by the U.S. Forest Service indicated forage was badly overgrazed. Observers saw 2,495 elk that year. During the same year, W. M. Rush of the U.S. Forest Service recommended that elk numbers in the Sun River area be kept below 2,500 head and that the Sun River Game Preserve be opened to elk hunting. His advice and that of others, such as the noted authority, Olaus J. Murie,

went unheeded and elk populations continued to increase to their estimated highest peak in this century during the 1930's.

History of Wildlife Range Competition

Elk and bighorn sheep compete for food on winter range in Sun River Canyon, West Fork of Sun River and the Fairview Plateau vicinities. An estimated 70 percent of the bighorn sheep populations perished in the winter of 1924-25. Other bighorn sheep die-offs were recorded in 1927, 1932 and 1936. Losses of elk also occurred. Observers wrote that nearly the entire elk calf crop was lost in the winter of 1929-30. Elk winter losses were recorded in 1934 and into the early 1940's. The occurrence of bighorn sheep die-offs two to three years before those of elk shows the larger, more powerful elk are the better range competitors.

Elk Hunting Seasons

Because of the presence of the Sun River Game Preserve, weather plays a greater than normal part in hunter success. The hunters depend upon severe weather conditions to drive elk from the preserve into areas open for hunting. Usually the pattern of harvest is one in which the success is high the first few days of the season. The early success is generally followed by periods of mild weather and disappointed hunters who unsuccessfully hunt elk until snow

storms drive more elk out of the preserve. During hunting seasons with long periods of mild weather, it has often been necessary to extend the season into January or February in order to harvest sufficient elk to keep the population in balance with winter range and other wildlife populations. Late hunting seasons in the rugged Sun River terrain are difficult at best for both man and beast. Most outfitters generally hunt the area only until the first part of December when severe weather makes hunting too strenuous for the majority of their clients.

Sun River Game Preserve and Wilderness Hunting

Present elk hunting conditions along the preserve boundary could better be described as a horse race rather than a true wilderness hunt. Hunters patrol the narrow flats along the river boundary every morning hoping elk have moved into the region open for hunting. Some even hide along the boundary and wait for elk to get both front feet out of the water and into the open area. In favored elk crossings such as the Whiskey Creek-Elk Hill locality in the Bob Marshall Wilderness, hunters surround the site on all sides and blaze away at any elk trapped in the middle. This firing-line situation, created by man, is emphatically not quality wilderness elk hunting. A situation where hunters could hunt the entire area, achieve the desired quota early and allow the elk to move onto their normal winter ranges would be much more of a quality wilderness type hunt.

Elk Harvest and Elk Calf Production

In recent years, hunters have heavily harvested and perhaps over-harvested portions of the elk population living outside the preserve and lightly harvested the much larger segment of the elk herd which spends summer and fall in the preserve. Coincidentally, the elk population living outside the preserve in more accessible areas is younger and observers have found production ratios ranging between 45 and 70 calves per 100 cows. The larger, older segment inside the preserve produces only about 15-22 calves per 100 cows. Overall production in 1968 for the entire Sun River elk

population averaged about 30 calves per 100 cows. Unless ways can be found to harvest a relatively higher percentage of the elk summering inside the preserve, the elk population probably will be made up of an increasingly larger proportion of unproductive preserve animals.

What part does harvest play in the age structure of the elk herd? Assuming that the harvest is non-selective for any age of elk cows, bigger takes of elk result in a younger age structure since animals are being removed from all age classes while they can only be added to by calves. Conversely, the low mortality rate among cow elk spending summer and fall in the preserve allows a build-up of the older age classes which do not produce as many calves as younger, prime age cows.

Elk Productivity and Range in the Sun River Game Preserve

Another reason for the lower productivity of preserve elk is that they congregate along the boundary of the preserve in the fall and overgraze the range until severe cold and deep snow make them hungry enough to move past hunter concentrations to more suitable winter range. In the spring of 1968, bunchgrass transects on the West Fork of the Sun River showed 99 out of 100 Idaho fescue plants had been grazed to nearly ground level by elk. Most of the utilization occurred during the fall hunting season as aerial surveys showed few elk wintered in the area.

Elk Versus Bighorn Sheep

While some people associate only elk with the Sun River region, many others are aware that it embraces one of the largest and finest bighorn sheep herds in the United States. Since 1953, the Sun River district has furnished hunting for 3/4 curl rams. The past two years, 60 permits have been issued annually with good hunter success. In addition, the herd has furnished many bighorn sheep for transplanting to other parts of the state.

Each winter many elk use the 20,000-acre Sun River Game Range in the foothills outside the mountains. However, many elk also still utilize mountainous back country winter ranges and compete with bighorn sheep for win-

ter forage. Many more elk will be available to hunters each fall without increasing the base breeding herd if current low calf production is increased to a higher level comparable to some of the other elk herds in Montana.

It has been determined that elk populations must be maintained at approximately the present level if the less competitive bighorn sheep herd is to survive.

Type of Elk Hunting Seasons

Some persons have the misconception that the Fish and Game Commission desires limited permit elk hunting for the Sun River area. Nothing could be further from the truth. The desire of the commission is to produce quality hunting. Sportsmen should remember that limited elk permits and roads—not wilderness areas—go hand-in-hand. Easy hunter access by vehicle usually necessitates special permit seasons to control elk harvest and insure stable populations.

For the past several years, the elk harvest in the Sun River district has been regulated by an elk quota system. Checking stations data and reports of elk killed by outfitters' clients and individual hunters have been used to determine the number of elk harvested. When the desired number is reached, the season is closed on 48-hour notice. Records for recent years show the system works well. Currently, only cows and calves are counted in the quota. However, an accurate record of bulls taken is also maintained.

Legislative Versus Commission Control

There has been objection to removal of the Sun River Preserve (**not game range**) from legislative control. One of the main points of those objecting is that the Fish and Game Commission is trying to take game management out of the hands of the people. This is a misunderstanding because the legislature has designated the commission as the legal board to manage wildlife in the state. The commission, appointed by the governor and approved by the legislature, meets once a month and works closely with full-time, professional personnel hired to collect and analyze information for the best management of Mon-

tana's wildlife resources. At the same time they are in close contact with an interested public. The legislature, on the other hand, has a different function—to pass on game laws and to budget the commission. It has little opportunity to discuss game management except for a short period every two years. Both groups, however, maintain an open door policy for sportsmen.

Repeal of the law which established the preserve in 1913 would not necessarily mean the preserve should be abandoned for all animal species for all time to come. Indeed, until factual information shows otherwise, it should probably be maintained as a grizzly bear preserve.

The facts show the legislative controlled Sun River Game Preserve long ago outlived its usefulness for elk. The more quickly it comes under the management of the Montana Fish and Game Commission and is opened to controlled hunting, the more quickly a thriving elk population, balanced with other game species will be attained and the less the wilderness resources will suffer.

Management of Sun River Elk

The Montana Fish and Game Commission has approved a plan for the systematic harvesting of elk in the Sun River complex. Until such time as overall range and associated game conditions demonstrate a need for change, the quota for the Sun River elk will be set to maintain the herd at the present level of 2,000 to 2,200 head during the winter.

The 1969 hunting season in the Sun River will open October 19, but a closing date has not been set. Either sex elk hunting there will be closed when a desired quota of cows and calves have been taken. Bulls are not counted into this quota, because it has been substantiated that the possibility of overshooting bulls in a herd is remote. Should it occur, calves of the previous year can successfully breed during the fall as yearlings. Due to the ruggedness and inaccessibility of this mountainous area, trophy bulls will probably always be available.

The 1969 season and all succeeding seasons will be designed to close on 48 hours notice when the

desired quota of cows and calves is attained. It will be necessary to manipulate the annual quota in order to bring pressure selectively on various segments of the elk herd. It is necessary that regulation details remain flexible in order to achieve this.

From 1957 through 1965, two-thirds of the elk taken in district 42 came from the more accessible area south of the Sun River. In order to balance this lop-sided harvest, a quota was established so that two-thirds of the annual harvest would be taken from the less accessible herd north of the river. This put more pressure on elk which spent most of their lives inside the Sun River Game Preserve. During the 1968 elk season, a little more pressure was again shifted to the south side of the Sun River in order to ease use on back country winter range. For the season coming up in 1969, it is proposed that more pressure again be put on the northern herd and two-thirds of the elk quota will come from elk north of the Sun River. In order to take more preserve elk and to take them over a shorter period of time, there will have to be some boundary adjustments for hunting district 42.

It is expected that a change in hunting boundaries accompanied by flexible quotas for either sex and defined bull seasons will give the best chance of reaching management goals. The goals are: to harvest more animals that dwell primarily in the Sun River Preserve; to get a more productive herd; and to get a desired harvest

during a shorter hunting period.

Should the Sun River Game Preserve eventually be abandoned, the total herd size will still be held at or near the present level of wintering elk. The level will be maintained unless there is definite knowledge that it should be changed.

Herd size will be determined by aerial census during winters when suitable weather conditions permit accurate counts. Eight percent of the yearly quota will be attributed to that portion of the herd that is harvested in the Flathead Drainage, and will be subtracted from the total Sun River quota. An additional six percent will be subtracted for elk that are assumed to bypass the Augusta checking station. This percentage was determined by establishing check stations on other access routes during past years.

Through systematic checks of hunters and of outfitter records during the hunting season, chances of overharvest are minimal. The quotas set before the hunting season by the Fish and Game Commission have been very close to final checking station tallies during the past several years. Also, aerial trend counts of hunting district 42 under fair counting conditions for the past five years have shown the base herd size is remaining static. Holding the Sun River elk herd at its present size should allow the back country range to hold its own, or possibly it may improve, thus allowing an increase in the base herd at some future time.

Table 1. Elk Kill Checking Station Data, Hunting District 42

Year	Aerial Count	Check Station Count	Quota	Bulls 1/	Cows & Calves	Total Harvest
1961	2,260	580	450	249 (43)	331	580
1962	2,231	146	350	68 (46)	78	146
1963	1,329	122	200	42 (34)	80	122
1964	1,289	100	210	49 (49)	51	100
1965	2,051	321	400	179 (56)	142	321
1966	2,040	355	400	177 (42)	178	417 ²
1967	2,069	391 ³	235 ³	160 (41)	231 ³	391
1968	2,160	376 ³	280 ³	142 (38)	234 ³	376
1969	2,192					

1/ Percent of total harvest comprised by bulls

2/ Includes kills from outfitter records which at times were not listed by sex and age

3/ Quota pertains to cows and calves only

STATE GAME WARDEN HONORED

State Game Warden Jim Ramsey of Missoula has been honored as an outstanding law enforcement officer by Shikar-Safari International, an organization of outstanding sportsmen. John G. Cameron of Cascade, a member of the organization, presented Ramsey with a certificate and a \$50.00 check at the March Fish and Game Commission meeting. Shikar-Safari sponsors the award as part of their program to assist with the protection, management and conservation of wildlife. This was the first award the organization has made in Montana.

Cameron said his organization picked Warden Ramsey on the basis of his excellent overall wildlife law enforcement performance. The Shikar-Safari representative cited Ramsey for many qualities, including his excellent public contact, his relationships with other department employees as well as other law enforcement personnel in the communities he has served.

Warden Ramsey was employed by the Montana Fish and Game Department on February 15, 1948 as a hatcheryman at the Montana



State Game Warden Jim Ramsey of Missoula, Montana receives award from Shikar-Safari. John Cameron of Cascade, a member of the international sportsmen's organization, presented the award and a \$50.00 check.

State Game Bird Farm at Warm Springs. He was promoted to assistant foreman on June 30, 1948, and served as assistant foreman at the Moiese Game Farm, Billings Game Farm and Fort Peck Game

Farm until September 30, 1956. On October 1, 1956, he was transferred to Missoula as state game warden. Since that time, he has served as state fish and game warden in Missoula and Superior.

The Other Face of Conservation

By Wendell Beaver, Former
Director, Oklahoma Department
of Wildlife Conservation

I AM AN ANGRY MAN! I've had 25 years to build a full head of steam. I detest the word "compromise" with a passion. We've used the word as a vehicle to sell wildlife down the river.

Tell me, how do we compromise pure water, clean air and wild creatures?

I am impatient! Impatient with conservation lip service, impatient with the attitude, "Let's wait till next year," and impatient with laws that provide the authority but no teeth or funds.

I am irritated. Irritated with just plain people who stand to gain or lose the most.

We got a problem, friend. Take a long, hard look!

Oklahoma is losing 100,000-plus bobwhite quail each year and South Dakota is trying desperately to shore up a sagging pheasant

population. In Saskatchewan and the north-central states, the ability of the prairie marshes to produce ducks decreases about 80,000 birds each year.

IN WYOMING AND MONTANA, antelope show a precarious trend and may be living on borrowed time. South Dakota's pheasant population once numbered a whopping thirteen million birds and today, about three million.

Pesticides, herbicides, bulldozers, plowshares, drainage ditches, reservoirs and even such things as woven wire fences are playing havoc upon our wild environments.

Some of the best saltwater ecologists in the country tell us the Mississippi River drains the chemically polluted waters of thousands of tributaries into the gulf. Here many of the more stable chemical compounds threaten to break the basic food chain neces-

sary to maintain the gulf as one of the world's great natural fish traps.

Some say it's already beginning to happen. North America's largest cesspool, Lake Erie, is well known to all of us. Why not the gulf?

Most of us are acutely aware of the dangers of a poison when consumed by living creatures, but how many of us have ever stopped to consider the even greater threat—the changing of whole environments. A poisoned critter can get well but destroy his home and nothing will save him—except a zoo!

We farm the land clean. We no longer tolerate the sunflower, the thistle or pigeon grass. With clean farming we create a new environment of hundreds of thousands of acres of single kinds of crops—perhaps wheat, corn, soybean or cotton. We create an ideal situation for that particular insect that



Is Wildlife Becoming Old-Fashioned?

specializes on certain types of crops.

BECAUSE THE THREAT of damage is increased so profoundly we flood our fields with chemical sprays—sometimes once, sometimes eight to ten times a year. We keep the detrimental insect problem in hand, but along with him we destroy the beneficial insects also.

The young of bobwhite quail, or pheasants or grouse, simply cannot survive without the supercharged protein foods that insects alone can provide. Thus, even though we find only minute traces of an insecticide in the young bobwhite, he may ultimately die.

Insecticides and herbicides accomplish two things—they eliminate insect life at a critical time of year and they transform a habitat made up of many parts into a habitat made up of a single part.

Wildlife cannot survive in a single purpose environment any more than it can survive in your living room.

In Wyoming and other western states, chemical sprays are being used to convert hundreds of thousands of acres of sagebrush to prairie grasses—the death knell for antelope, sage grouse and even the mule deer.

IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS a subtle change is in the making. From New Mexico to Canada, mule deer and elk are being subjected to the old squeeze play. In one mountain range after another, populations are beginning to level off, and some ecologists are disturbed by the marked decline in ability of some former great game ranges to carry even a static population.

In the Rocky Mountains we plant productive old burns to pine, skipping the natural brushlands which normally follow. And we wind up with sawdust and 2 by 4's—but no game. Oklahoma annually plants 200,000 acres of native rangelands to bermuda grass—the perfect formula for eliminating about 100,000 bobs each year.

Even the wily trout has a problem. In the Black Hills of Wyoming and South Dakota, 2,600 miles of trout stream have declined to less than 200. And in other states, dwindling stream flows give evidence of future problems.

As long as we raise more people, we work the lands harder—always trying to close the food gap—and we never will. In the meantime, Mister Bobwhite and his wild companions dwindle and

dwindle until one day it's, "Do you remember the good old days when . . .?"

Mister Sportsman, we are in trouble.

DO YOU KNOW THE CULT-PRIT? The problem rides under the guise of "good conservation," the dollar sign and a booming population of people.

Don't hit the panic button! Not yet.

Don't pressure your game department to restrict hunting and fishing seasons. This doesn't help. It actually compounds the problem by creating an illusion that by saving wildlife we have found a solution. This kind of misconception just clouds the issue.

Look at the facts!

All of those wild birds, animals and fish are declining because of free use of pesticides, environmental pollution, clean farming, drainage and going hog-wild on the manipulation of water. Even such things as forest management and the control of fire have in many instances created more wildlife problems than they help to solve.

Have we got problems? You can't imagine.

Hunters take a harvestable surplus which has almost no effect, other than beneficial, upon wildlife. It is true that some big game seasons are designed to reduce populations and this is necessary.

But, remember, most range and forest management plans are designed to grow trees and grass—not wildlife. A hundred animals or a hundred fish, there is still a surplus to be harvested. Sportsmen should stop fighting ghosts and learn who the real enemies are.

STUDY THE PRAIRIE STATE of South Dakota. Look at a good example of the problem.

Just a few years ago this state carried 300 pheasants per square mile within the better range. The population skid started in the 1940's and plunged to a low of about two million birds by 1966—the lowest level in 30 years. The decline was classed as a public disaster.

What happened?

Upheaval in the game department. Accusations and counter-accusations.irate citizens,irate legislators. You name it, everything that could happen did happen.

You can't drop from thirteen million birds to two million without blaming somebody, even if it's the wrong man or animal. It just "ain't" done in our great society. But who to blame?

Since the game department was the handiest, they were raked over the coals just on general principals. Because the little red fox eats a pheasant once in a while, he got a good going over too. And, of course, the old standard—the cotton-picking hunting seasons were just too liberal.

FINALLY, AFTER A LONG drawnout hassle, we came to the real culprit. And a feeble voice of the minority out of hundreds of thousands of sportsmen, tourist promoters and landowners suggested that, perhaps, clean farming with its multitude of chemical sprays just "might" be the problem.

Might be? Hell, it was the problem! It always has been! There are enough data and facts floating around to sink a battleship!

As Director of a game department, it isn't easy to keep my composure when confronted with people who contaminate or change the environment with one hand and yell bloody murder about limits being too liberal or seasons too long on the other.

It's time we recognized that, all over the United States, with all kinds of wildlife, the clean, antiseptic manicured and single-purpose environments—all under the guise of good wildlife conservation—is destroying wildlife ten times more efficiently than rifles or shotguns ever did.

In the U.S. we spent 20 years poisoning every prairie dog in sight. Then we scratched our collective heads wondering what happened to the Black-Footed ferret—a beautiful, lithe, little animal that depends almost wholly on the prairie dog as its basic food source.

Can you live without food?

THROUGHOUT MUCH OF TEXAS and north through the Dakotas to the Canadian line, programs are being designed by federal as well as private interests to change a varied habitat of shrubs, trees, forbs and grasses to pure waving stands of introduced and domestic grasses. It is a beautiful sight to a whiteface cow but the



Modern forest management often shortcuts natural plant succession which produces shrubby vegetation as seen on this old burned over area.

death knell for antelope, deer and sage grouse.

Further west, in our Rocky Mountains, old forest fire burns with their unsightly dead snags, nothing but grasses, chokecherry, kinnikinnick and aspen glades offend the eyes of forest managers.

So what do we do?

We bulldoze the dead trees littering the ground into neat windrows and we plant evergreens to speed up nature's processes. At the end of a few years a beautiful stand of pine develops—the chokecherry and aspen can no longer compete and they fade out of the picture.

From game range to pulpwood in a decade. Was it a good trade?

It is a simple function of economics. It's a sight easier to place a price on a board foot of pine than a cubic foot of water or a ruffed grouse.

We no longer manage "wild" forests, we farm them. In time, perhaps, we may even farm most game birds and animals. Perhaps the word "wildlife" will have little meaning in that future decade.

It's a well-documented fact that modern and scientific wildlife management, paid for by the hunters, has restored more wildlife than has even been lost, but only in those areas where the habitat is suitable. Unfortunately, we are losing habitat a whale of a lot

faster than we can adjust or find solutions.

WILDLIFE HAS ALWAYS NEEDED crusaders—people willing to stand up and be counted. It's so easy to say "a little bit of pollution or habitat destruction won't hurt." But remember, tens of thousands of "little bits" can add up to a catastrophe.

Few people realize the tremendous effect upon the environment that man is intentionally causing. We no longer manage timber stands in our national forests. We literally farm them with tremendously efficient and sophisticated tools that can treat thousands of acres in a day. The true wild environment is fast disappearing and I dread to see its going.

The United States contains some two-thirds billion acres of public lands for the recreational use of its citizens. I've got a saddle horse and a pack mare and each year I see a little bit of these 770 million acres. A couple of years ago it was the Gila Wilderness area in southern New Mexico, and last year the Popo Agie River in the Wind River Range, and each year I find the land a little less wild.

Only in the most distant muskeg or lonely mountain ranges of northern Canada do we find the stillness and loveliness of the true untrammelled wilderness. The

wild country is a symbol of man's earliest ancestry when he stepped from the pages of the past. What sportsman really wants to let go of this heritage?

We face a problem, friend. We can't afford to argue economic values and exchange a bobwhite with an acre of bermuda grass. We simply cannot continue to compromise wildlife—again and again.

The list of species in trouble grows annually and the problem compounds itself. Is it because wildlife is not worth saving? If we accept the idea that we can't favorably equate a bobwhite with a pound of beef or a pheasant with a bushel of corn, then perhaps we are lost.

The cure concerns a universal problem. It is not local but national in scope. It is deeply involved with a sky-rocketing hu-

man population, abroad as well as at home. As the world of people grows, the more we try to feed them and this means more intensive land-use at home.

If we are successful in keeping more people alive, then we must place greater demands upon our basic resources to feed more people in the future. And this means less wildlife. We are fitting people into cities like sardines in a can and the general agreement is that expansionism is good for us.

ARE WE REALLY INTERESTED in quality existence? Are we on a run-away course of more and more people crammed into great compartmentalized colonies within artificial playgrounds?

Is wildlife becoming old-fashioned?

I don't know the answers but I do know this. All state game de-

partments have competent people that know the problem and some of the answers. Give them your support. Don't be afraid to speak out. Honor yourself as an individual and give your identity a chance to be recognized.

You don't have to be a hunter or a fisherman. If you thrill to the song of a bird, exult in the beauty of the high and wild country or walk with God in the fields and forests, it's your battle, too.

If wildlife means anything to you, get off your fanny. Join a state and national conservation organization. Work with your legislature and congressmen. Ask your Department what you can do to help.

And WORK at it. Make it your crusade.

Don't be a spectator! Get down on the field and join the team.

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